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THE sixth century before the Christian era must have been remarked by all who are in any degree conversant with Grecian literature, as replete with minstrels of no common order. They arose as it were in one constellation of brightness; their fame has been accorded by the voice of successive ages, but by a singular coincidence of fatality, they have all been known to posterity only by scattered and disjointed frag-

ments. We have already presented three of these bards; and we ~~at last~~ in this number shall attempt to give a sketch of the character & writings of a fourth.

MIMNERMUS was born at Colophon, or according to others at Smyrna. Alike with his reputed mistress Nanno, he followed the professions, then almost inseparable, of poet and musician. Abandoning himself solely to these employments, he dismissed from his mind every care and trouble of life; and in all probability, led rather a loose and profligate course of life in his younger days. He is said to have composed both elegies and songs of a more wanton kind; the former only however have descended to us. They appear to be the productions of advanced life, when all that was beautiful or delightful had passed away, and the author looked back to scenes of former pleasure with emotions of regret. There is undoubtedly to be seen in the fragments which remain, a remembrance ~~and exulting for~~ of youthful sensuality, and a disgusting regret for its loss, totally

incompatible with the gravity of old age. They are the complaints of an aged debauchee, whose mind, hopelessly brooding on scenes of perished joy, finds fault with all around it, and casts over the whole of life a shade whose evident origin disgusts instead of giving solemnity to the feelings. The pleasures that deluded in youth, the feverish years of enjoyment that have wasted life away, now show all their hollow emptiness to the startled vision of declining age, only to blast with the recollection, and to inspire emotions of morbid sensibility, and unavailing repinings. Whatever might have been the earlier poetry of Mimnermus, whom antiquity has celebrated likewise for his amorous elegies, there certainly are no traces left of what his character is stated to have been, wild, ~~disso~~ joyous, & careless. They prove him however to have been dissolute in youth, and a misanthrope in old age; two extremes, we fear, not uncommon even at the present day.

The invention of pentameters has been attributed to Mimnermus; but we believe without foundation, as they are found in poets of an older date than him; and the introduction of them has been attributed to several others.

As nothing further occurs to us of his life that would be interesting to our readers, we proceed to the translation of a few of his elegaic fragments. The original contains a strong vein of poetry, and leads us to conclude that in earlier days, and more vigorous efforts, he was a poet of no ordinary stamp. They are the productions of old age; but they are also the productions of a mind originally strong, however weakened by cause, already alluded to.

No. 1. On the shortness of life.

[Ἡμεῖς δ', οἷά τε φύλλα, κ. τ. λ. —]

We, like the flowery spring's awaking leaves,
When the [illegible] bright sun a sudden splendor heaves,
[illegible] youth's frail flowers a transient time delight,
Untaught by heav'n the thought of wrong or right.

While two dark fates our rising years oppress,
Death, and old age's waning helplessness.
A passing hour the fruits of youth abide,
Brief as the last beams of the solar tide;
And when this hour is past upon our path,
Life seems less lovely than the gloom of death.
For oh! what various ills the heart oppress!
Domestic woe; or penury's dark distress;
One, that desires to leave a race behind,
dies, and beholds his hopes dispersed to wind;
Another, lingering years of pain destroy;
For Jove has mingled woe with every cup of joy!

No. II. Old Age. [Αλλ' οδι δολχοτριον, κ.τ.λ.]

Dream-like, youth's precious moments pass away,
And eye descends to close the panting day;
Drear and unlovely, beauty hails it not;
The man of years is hated or forgot;
The blooming fields can bless the sight no more,
Nor genius o'er the mind its radiance pour.
Jove to Tithonus gave, an eternal doom,
Old age — more dreadful even than the tomb.
The loveliest form, when all its beauties fade,
Beholds nor filial love, nor friendly homage paid.

No. III. (Αι γαρ ατερ, κ.τ.λ.)

Would that without disease & toilsome care
At threescore years death's silence I might share

No. IV. [Δειλοι γαρ ανδρι κ.τ.λ.]

In life, our envy sickens at the great man's name,
Hush'd in the grave, we celebrate his fame!

No. V. On ~~Fortitude~~ Courage.

[Ου μεν δη κεινος γε, κ.τ.λ.]

Scarce can my heart beleive his strength of soul,
And theirs who liv'd before I saw the light,
Who saw him in the battle's piteous roll
Squadrons of Lydian horsemen put to flight,
On Hermus' plains, arm'd only with a spear;
Nor did Minerva give one power severe
To see him foremost in the bloody fight
Where force the cruel shafts of war repell'd,
And none so valiant burst upon the sight
As him who still the toil of blood upheld,
While yet the rapid sun kept back the night.

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There is another fragment of ten lines in length, which we forbear to present to our readers, because it is next to impossible to give a translation at once faithful to the original, & pleasing to the chaste ear, although it would tend more than any we have quoted to confirm our opinion of his dissolute character. A general idea of it however may not be unacceptable. He asks what joy would be in life were venus gone? And proceeds to say, that if all the enjoyments of guilty pleasure, some of which he

enumerates, were removed, life would not be worth possessing; — he then paints old age in the most wretched light, as deprived of all these sensual gratifications; and concludes,

By woman scorned, by youth itself despised,
How dreadful is the age assign'd by heaven.

From the fragments of Mimnermus, we are ready to confess, little instruction is to be derived. We turn with offended feelings from the contemplation of brutal sensuality poisoning every hour of life, throwing its intoxicating shadows over the promise of youth, the excitations of genius, the vigor of maturity, and even maddening the fleeting years of life with the recollection of joys, whose brief duration ought to have proved their folly. The heart that cultivates the lessons of virtue, & fosters its buds within its inmost recesses, will look on old age with a complacency & a real satisfaction which the remembrance of past innocence alone can bestow. The

misanthropic complainings of Mimnermus too faithfully portray the horrors of an old age, all the remembrances of which are only mingled with regrets, disappointments, and vexations.

E.